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Regan orders investigation of security

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Treasury Secretary Donald Regan ordered an investigation Wednesday into the performance of the Secret Service and other agencies before, during and after the attempted assassination of President Reagan.

The investigation will parallel at least four congressional and executive branch inquiries into the wounding of the president and three other persons Monday.

"It appears there was a breakdown in security," said Rep. Edward R. Roybal, D-Calif., who has called Regan to appear before a House appropriations subcommittee Thursday.

Similarly, Sen. James Abdnor, R-S.D., chairman of a similar Senate committee, has summoned H. Stuart Knight, the Secret Service director, to testify Thursday.

"The senator wants to know how someone could get that close," said Michael Freeman, an Abdnor spokesman, "how it could happen."

In his inquiry, Roybal said he wants to know how John W. Hinckley Jr., the alleged assailant, could have come to Washington, and moved close enough to shoot Reagan outside a Washington hotel without being challenged.

Reportedly, Roybal said, the FBI had at least preliminary reports of Hinckley's arrest on weapons charges in Nashville, Tenn., when then-President Jimmy Carter was making a campaign appearance.

"Why is there a lack of cooperation between these two agencies?" Roybal asked.

Roybal said he also wants to look into whether a president should wear a bulletproof vest.

Most of the specific questions on the shooting will be directed to Knight when he appears before the appropriations subcommittee next Wednesday, Roybal said.

Meanwhile, Regan testified before the Senate Treasury appropriations subcommittee Wednesday that he has ordered a wide review of his department's performance in the assassination attempt.

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